

COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - July 2022

Chief

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COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - July 2022

Chief

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MEET THE CHIEF GETTING TO KNOW TODD LAGOW.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



John Prillaman
2022 VFCA President
Salem Fire and EMS Department

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors has been busy over the last few months. We continue to further the mission of the VFCA through leadership, education, and advocacy. Some of the highlights include the 2022 Virginia Fire Chiefs Summit, fire chief mentorship program, a new website and regional shakers forums.

In May, more than 70 fire chiefs from across the Commonwealth attended the 2022 Virginia Fire Chiefs Summit in Glen Allen, to fellowship and learn from a host of great speakers. Governor Youngkin and Secretary Mosier kicked off the summit, assuring everyone that public safety is a priority in the governor's administration. The summit included several impactful presentations, but was highlighted by a diverse group of young firefighters, who told their stories and participated in a very interactive panel. I would especially like to thank Deputy Chief Cooper for putting together an extraordinary summit and program. Chief Oughton is leading the VFCA Mentorship Program. We are looking for current fire chiefs willing to serve as mentors for newly appointed fire chiefs. As many current fire chiefs know, there are a lot of issues that you will deal with as a fire chief that are not in any books. The mentorship program is designed to connect new fire chiefs with experienced fire chiefs of similar type organizations. Please reach out to Chief Oughton if you are interested in serving as a mentor or if you know of a new fire chief that might benefit from the program.

Chief Johnson continues to lead our efforts to purchase and implement a new website for the VFCA. The Website Work Group has worked with a consultant to review numerous proposals and I am happy to report that a vendor has been selected. The group is finalizing an agreement and we hope to have a new website up and running by the first of next year. The new website will have a bold new look, with many new features and will provide a more "user friendly" method for our members to pay or donate to the organization.

Deputy Chief Baldwin is coordinating our first VFCA Regional Shakers Forum. The event is scheduled for June 16th at the Stafford County Public Safety Building. I know many of you have attended the shakers forums at the Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach. These regional forums will be held across the Commonwealth and will focus more on the regional issues we are each experiencing. Please consider participating in a Shakers Forum near you.

These are just a few of the exciting things happening within the VFCA. We are always looking for ways to add value to our members. If you have an idea or would like to take a more active role in the VFCA please feel free to contact me or one of our outstanding board members.

I hope everyone has a great summer. Please stay safe!

VFCA Regional Shakers Forum June 16th Stafford County Public Safety Building

**For additional information
go to the VFCA website**

**vfca.us
and click on the link provided**

2022 VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS SUMMIT

Vance Cooper, Virginia Beach Fire Department

The 8th Annual VFCA Chief's Summit was held May 12th & 13th in Glen Allen VA. This summit, which is hosted by Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, had over 65 fire chiefs from all over the state in attendance. The summit started with a presentation of colors and the pledge of allegiance followed immediately by opening remarks from Governor Youngkin and Secretary Mosier. It was awesome having both of them present which demonstrated their support for the fire service. The Governor expressed his heartfelt gratitude for our incredible acts of service within our communities as well as his commitment to move Virginia's fire service in the right direction with legislation, leadership and needed funding. Thank you for your support Governor Youngkin.

The topics of the summit were diversity in recruitment & retention, real life story of mental health -PTSD, where we are with fire service legislation, how to improve firefighter health-wellness-fitness, collective bargaining & mediation services, shaker's roundtable and a presentation from Portsmouth FD about their cities dangerous streets and the impact on their department. Each session had key learning points and significant take-aways that will make our departments better for the future. You can find the individual presentations on our website <https://vfca.us/>

The networking and comradery of the event was highlighted by the conversations heard during social events sponsored by First Arriving and Atlantic Emergency Solutions. Thank you all for your attendance and commitment to open debate to encourage learning and advancement of our profession.



Governor Glenn Youngkin, joined by Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Bob Mosier, opened our 8th Annual Fire Chief's Summit by emphasizing the importance of "Coming together to get better every day and working together as it's a time to remind all Virginians that we got your back."



Diversity in Recruitment & Retention: Are we doing this right? A diverse panel of firefighters participating in a energetic and thoughtful discussion about why they choose the Fire service.



#VFCA 8th Annual Fire Chief's Summit's leaders are currently diving in deep with Chesapeake Fire Department Captain Christopher Moore to tough questions—"PTSD in your Department? Are you ready?"



Portsmouth Fire Chief Nestor Mangubat closed out two great days at the Summit with a critical presentation focused on "Are your firefighters finding themselves on dangerous incidents?" An in-depth educational session to provide leaders with more insight about dangerous streets, and how Portsmouth was chosen for Harvard's Innovative City Fellowship Program.

Photos: Kevin Good

SAVE THE DATE!

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3RD ANNUAL VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION 5K RUN/WALK

The 3rd Annual 5K started off a little like the inaugural event back in 2020 – by being delayed due to weather! The original date for the 2022 event was March 12, but due to thunderstorms, high winds and snow in Williamsburg all on the same day, it had to be postponed to April 30. There were over 250 people registered to participate leading up to the event. There were approximately 150 individuals that participated in the event. This year's event had great sponsor support again as in past years. The Sponsors this year included the following:

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Silver Sponsors - Grand Canyon University, Chesterfield Insurers, Inspection Reports Online (IROL), ECS Mid-Atlantic, LLC, Williamsburg Honda Hyundai and Dominion Energy Virginia.

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We also want to provide a special acknowledgement to Chesterfield Insurers for the donation of bottled water and peanuts, Williamsburg Publix Store and the Williamsburg Earth Fare Store in providing refreshments for the participants at the conclusion of the Run/Walk! I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Colonial Roadrunners Club.

Between the generous sponsors and the registration fees generated, the Foundation raised over \$10,000 from this year's event. These funds will be reinvested into the Fire/EMS service through direct support of the Robert E. White Scholarship Fund and to help support funding to ensure the continuance of the Virginia Fire Officers Academy and the Virginia Chief Officer Academy.

The 5K Planning Team consisted of Pat Dent, Donald Booth, Kevin Duck, Rick Platt and myself. This event would not have realized the level of success without the support, dedication and commitment of these individuals – my sincere thanks to each of you for another job well done! The 4th Annual event is tentatively scheduled for March 11, 2023.

**Hope to see you
in the Spring!!!**





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CFSI AND MASIMO TO HONOR THREE FIRE DEPARTMENTS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) and Masimo will honor three fire and emergency services departments with the 2022 Excellence in Fire Service-Based EMS Award for their innovations in the delivery of emergency medical services.

The departments are the **South Metro (CO) Fire Rescue, Loudoun County (VA) Combined Fire and Rescue Systems,** and **Fairfax County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department.** The award presentation will take place at the 32nd Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner on April 7th in Washington, DC.

South Metro is being honored for implementing a point-of-care ultrasound imaging program in the pre-hospital environment. The goal of the program is to improve patient outcomes by enhancing on-scene diagnostic capacity. Designed initially for response to cardiac arrest emergencies, South Metro has expanded the program for lung imaging to identify clinical findings representative of COVID-19 pneumonia.

The second recipient involves a partnership between Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System and Fairfax County Fire Rescue Department. These two departments are being recognized for developing a novel pre-hospital blood program called the FACT-R, which stands for Field Available Component Transfusion Response program. This program enables emergency medical vehicles to carry whole blood that can be used in the field by Advanced Life Support Providers on trauma patients.

"With fire departments across the nation developing innovative programs to enhance their EMS capabilities, CFSI is proud to co-sponsor the Excellence in Fire Service-Based with Masimo to recognize fire departments for their innovations, said Bill Jenaway, CFSI Board President. "The programs developed by the 2022 award recipients demonstrate how the fire service continues to transform the level of care provided at the emergency scene, leading to greater positive outcomes for the patients."

VFCA BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS ATTEND CFSI SEMINAR'S AND DINNER



Virginia Fire Chief's Association President Chief Prillaman and Division 6 Vice-President Deputy Chief Marci Stone joined Fire and EMS leaders from around the country on April 6-7, 2022 in our nation's capital to address fire and life safety issues affecting our communities. First Vice-President Chief Allen Baldwin, Division 2 VP Chief Matt Tobia, VP At-Large 1 Chief Kevin Good, and Health & Safety Chair Chief Steve Kopczynski joined them to attend the 32nd National Fire & Emergency Services Seminar and Dinner. An essential collaboration with fire service leaders across the nation on core topics focused on sustaining strength and resilience in challenging times. These Board members were honored to listen to Dr. Lori Moore Merrill, U.S. Fire Administrator deliver the keynote address and proud to represent our VFCA members at the Congressional Fire Services Institute's annual event.



VFCA Board/Committee Members at the CFSI Dinner in Washington, D.C. in April. L to R Chief's: Baldwin, Stone, Good, Prillaman, Kopczynski and Tobis.

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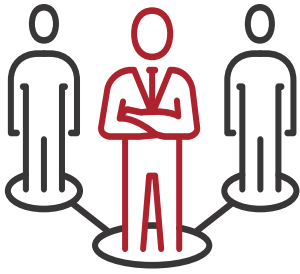


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WHERE HAVE ALL OF THE PERFECT LEADERS GONE?

Jay Cullinan
Spotsylvania County Virginia Fire, Rescue & Emergency Management - Fire Chief.

Where have all of the perfect leaders gone? Those who came before us who always knew the answers; the ones who never made mistakes; the ones that inspired those with which they worked with confidence through flawless execution of skills and that perfect mix of motivational examples and individualized coaching. You know.... the ones who never had a bad day; never even briefly lost their temper; and the ones that never felt discouraged by their own personal challenges or professional setbacks.

Why do these leaders and officers not exist in the fire department anymore? The honest answer is that while we all seem to continue to look for these folks, they don't exist within our profession (or any other), and they never did.

Yesterday's great fire service leaders were human, just as our current leaders are today. They made mistakes, learned from them, moved on, and hopefully passed along those hard lessons to those they used to lead. They spent years (and decades) learning and working to perfect their craft, reading and traveling far and wide taking classes from other great leaders, so they could pass along that knowledge to those they were responsible for; knowing that as the officer, they may have been one of the few sources their firefighters had to easily acquire such information.

Yesterday's great fire service leaders didn't have perfect lives. They had challenges at home, and frequently stressed over their work-life balance when it came to spending time with the families. They experienced frustration at the pace at which progress sometimes occurred (or didn't), and wondered why they were passed over for a promotion or to be included on some special project. While it was rare, they occasionally lost their temper and let out a brief rant expressing their frustration, later having to take back what they said with an apology. They second-thought their own decisions, questioning whether they had what it took to lead a team of Type-A personalities.

So, have things really changed that much today's fire service leaders? Yes, and no.

Some things have absolutely changed. The firefighters today's leaders are responsible for have a world of information at their fingertips, making some of them instant experts on any topic (in their own opinion). While it can be a challenge to keep up with the amount of information out there available to our firefighters, we shouldn't fear their access to it, or discourage them from seeking additional information on relevant topics. The key is to engage them in discussions about what they are finding, helping them sort through what is useful and what may not be the most accurate information. Most of us know that not everything that you can find on the internet is factual or relevant to the circumstances and resources we encounter in our own departments.

We also know that there are generational differences that today's fire service leaders must learn more about in order to navigate the accompanying challenges effectively. However, there really hasn't been a time in the fire service where we haven't dealt with generational differences. Even though I'm now one of the longest tenured personnel in my department, I was once that new guy...the young buck who thought he knew more than he really did.

Today's fire service is still comprised of many great leaders, and will continue to be. They face many of the same challenges that were faced by yesterday's great leaders; including the self-doubt, personal and professional challenges, and a struggle to identify the best course of action to grow and develop the next generation of fire service leaders.

Do today's fire service leaders have to be perfect? No, but they must make a constant and consistent effort to learn from mistakes and always keep improving. Failure is not the enemy, and it should not be feared, as long as we learn from it. While the world, especially others' social media posts, will take issue with every wrong step we make, we need to grant ourselves a little grace; extending that to others as well, when they need it. The fact that someone is concerned about whether they are "good enough" is evidence that they are reflecting on their own behavior and want to make sure they continue to develop into someone who will be considered a great leader at some point in the future.

Do not let the fear of failure or being criticized be what stops you from being willing to take that next forward step in your growth as a leader. The fire service and the world need determined leaders, who understand the importance of developing as an individual, as well as developing our teams. We're all human, and should expect some bumps in the road. Those who will be looked back on as great leaders will be the ones who pick themselves up and dust themselves off today, to make tomorrow better.

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Legislature Returns to Richmond; Governor Youngkin visits Fire Chiefs Summit

Written by Two Capitols Consulting
VFCA's full service Government Relations firm

On Wednesday, April 27, legislators returned to Richmond for the Reconvened Session, where each chamber considered the Governor's actions on legislation passed during the 2022 regular session. This year's Reconvened Session proved to be a bit interesting, with the General Assembly simultaneously in a special session to decide the fate of the budget. Governor Glenn Youngkin (R) handed down 26 vetoes and amended around 150 bills. Compared to previous years, this was a rather large number. Procedurally, when the Governor amends a bill, the chamber which originally passed the bill considers the Governor's amendments first. Then, if agreed to, the bill crosses over to the other chamber. If the amendment is voted down, the original bill is communicated back to the Governor. Finally, the Governor has the option to sign or veto the original bill. Ultimately, all of the Governor's vetoes were upheld, though legislators did reject a handful of his amendments to bills.

On May 12, the VFCA welcomed Governor Glenn Youngkin, Secretary Bob Mosier, and VDEM Director Shawn Talmadge, to the opening session of the 2022 Virginia Fire Chiefs Summit outside Richmond. In his remarks, Governor Youngkin offered gratitude for first responders, promoted the health and well being of firefighters, and emphasized the importance of the fire service having the training and equipment needed to do the job well.

Later in the day, Two Capitols gave a legislative presentation. Here is a brief list of new laws related to the fire services which passed this year:

- **Workers' Compensation** - [HB1042/SB562](#) - Extends the timeframe for filing a cancer claim to 12 years after retirement, with a cap at 65 years of age.
- **Marcus Alert System** - [HB1191/SB361](#) - Extends the deadlines and makes participation in Marcus alert system optional for localities with populations under 40,000 persons.
- **Agritourism Event Buildings** - [SB400](#) - Authorizes the Board of Housing and Community Development to promulgate regulations for minimal fire safety standards for buildings primarily used for holding events and entertainment gatherings, open to the public, with 300 people or less.
- **Vaccine** - [SB647](#) - Allows the Commissioner of Health to authorize administration and dispensing of vaccines during a state of emergency.

- **Traffic Incident Management (TIMs)** - [SB450/HB793](#) - Provides these vehicles, under VDOT management, can use red and white lights and sirens when en route to scene of an accident.
- **Volunteer Funding** - [HB746](#) - Creates a Volunteer Fire Department Training Fund to reimburse volunteer departments with costs of training and certifying their membership.

Finally, on June 1, the day this article was submitted for printing, the legislature returned to Richmond to vote on a biennial budget. This two-year budget deal is the result of months of negotiation between House and Senate budget conferees, working with budget staff for the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee. The proposal includes a variety of initiatives, particularly around taxes, including approximately \$3.5 billion in tax relief via the standard deduction, a one-time tax rebate, elimination of the grocery tax, increase of the Earned Income Tax Credit, and additional tax relief for military retirees. The budget also makes significant investments in education both K-12 and higher education, as well as housing and economic development initiatives. Assuming a favorable vote, Governor Youngkin will have seven days to act on the budget, which ultimately goes into effect on July 1, 2022.

If you have any questions for your legislative team in Richmond, please feel free to contact Devon Cabot (devon@2capconsulting.com) or Elizabeth Parker at (elizabeth@2capconsulting.com).





"Official Photos by Christian Martinez, Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin."



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State Fire Marshal's Office Partners with American Red Cross for Smoke Alarm Installation Event

Recently, the American Red Cross, working with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs - State Fire Marshal's Office; Marion Fire and EMS; and Adwolfe Volunteer Fire Department installed 70 smoke alarms in 43 homes in the Hall's Addition neighborhood of Smyth County.

Through the American Red Cross' Sound the Alarm program, residents were offered free smoke alarms or fresh batteries if smoke alarms were already installed and functional in the home. Additionally, each family was provided with educational materials on how to create a fire escape plan and home fire safety tips.



Congratulations to the VFMA's 43rd Basic Law Enforcement Graduating Class



The Virginia Department of Fire Programs congratulates the 24 fire marshals who graduated from the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy's 43rd Basic Law Enforcement session.

In sum, these students completed **more than 400 hours of training not including the hours of homework and study time after class.** Students received training in law and legal matters, defensive and control tactics, firearms, investigative techniques and case management, traffic stops and officer safety, forensics and evidence, interview and interrogation and courtroom testimony.

Special thanks to the Virginia Public Safety Training Center for providing the space and support and to all of VFMA's instructors for making this 10-week program possible!



Photo Courtesy of Norfolk Fire-Rescue

IS BEN FRANKLIN RIGHT FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT?

Spencer Cheatham

We all know that Ben Franklin started the American volunteer fire service in Philadelphia with the formation of the Union Fire Company in 1736. Forty years later, there were nearly 20 similar companies in the area, all of which followed a similar, very successful model:

- Self-governed
 - o Unaffiliated with the local, municipal government
 - o Firefighters took turns being administrative officers
 - o Members were punished if they missed a meeting
- Self-financed
 - o Members paid dues
- All members responded when an alarm sounded

Does your department's organizational model follow the one above? If so, are you able to meet the needs of the citizens? If not, why are you still using that model?

Let's look at each of these characteristics and explore why they might not work for today's volunteer fire department.

Self-Governed

A large portion of volunteer departments across the nation are non-profit organizations which can be a great benefit. Local governments cannot accept donations and often they want to be "hands-off" when it comes to the fire department. While ultimately it is their responsibility to provide for the public, when the fire department is not a part of the government, they get the best of both worlds. When good things happen, they can be quick to say, "see what a great department we have?" When bad things happen, the criticism may be even quicker, with comments such as "they are their own entity, so you'll have to ask the fire department, not me."

Fire departments and local governments should work together to provide services. Department leaders should develop relationships with those who represent the people they protect. Likewise, those representatives should seek to understand departments and what they can and cannot do. County supervisors or town councilors do not have to become firefighters, but they must understand what they do. Similarly, chiefs do not need to be politicians, but they do need to know the rules of the political game.

One common element of self-governed departments is that they often appoint firefighters as business leaders. President, treasurer, and secretary are offices held by those who also spend numerous hours responding to and training for calls. This may have worked decades ago, but today's departments have seen a rise in call volume and training requirements. At the same time, regulatory requirements for non-profits and departments have increased.

Finding someone who can meet both the operational and administrative needs of the organization may be difficult. To address this, departments should consider reaching out to their community to find those with business skills. This can free up your firefighters to concentrate not only on what they want to do, but also what they are trained to do, answer calls.

The bylaws of numerous volunteer departments rightly focus on the administrative needs, including having business meetings. These meetings require a certain number of people in attendance to vote on matters. To ensure that number is met, some departments punish members who miss meetings. While understandable, fire officers should seek to make meetings

more accessible by holding them virtually and should consider having the department's business run by a board instead of the entire department. This will show your operational members that their time is valued and will let them focus on what they are trained to do.

Self-Financed

Across this country, chicken dinners, fish fries, and bingo still go towards the purchase of apparatus, equipment, and stations. Far too many departments ask their members to leave their family during the week then ask them to do the same on the weekend to hold a fund raiser. I know a lot of people, including myself, who loved the idea of being a firefighter as a kid. I don't know of anyone who was excited to join the fire department so they could sweat over a grill with a hundred pieces of chicken on it.

Department leaders should ask if this is the best use of their member's time. Perhaps that time should be used to find someone to write grants and to work with their local government to provide the funding the citizens need for protection.

Even more difficult to understand is members paying dues to join a department. I've had the opportunity to work with many departments across the country. The invitation to do so has always been hinged on the idea that they are struggling to bring in new members. If that is the case, then why ask applicants to pay \$60 before they can join? Often this is stated as the cost of doing background checks or other administrative tasks. That may have made sense in the days of membership waiting lists, but there are too many non-fire service opportunities to volunteer which we compete with. Departments should look at the message it sends when we tell people that they have to pay to volunteer with us, especially in difficult economic times. Background checks and other administrative tasks associated with bringing in new members should be considered a "cost of doing business" now.

All Call

Rooftop air-raid sirens were once the preferred method of alerting everyone in the community of a call, sparking the response of all fire department members. Although most departments have gotten rid of their sirens, many still alert all their members when a call comes in. This may be archaic for many departments because of the change in call types.

Decades ago, when the department was called out, overwhelmingly it was for a major emergency. Alarms, EMS assists, trees down, and many other calls were unheard of then. Now, they compose the majority of our responses. Asking your members (and their families) to be awakened each night when these calls come out may lead to no one coming out. Most people don't mind getting up to answer a true emergency but doing so for every single call will wear on them. They end up with the "turnover/turn off syndrome." When they hear what they consider a non-emergency in the middle of the night, they turn over and turn off their pager. Then they do not hear the fire or another call which occurs, and the community suffers from a lack of adequate staff for the incident.

To combat this, departments should try to cover nights with a duty crew. Alarms, EMS assists, and many other calls can be handled with a two-

person crew. They don't have to stay at the station, if your department allows home response, but they do need to have a tone separate from the "all call." The other department members can keep their pager on knowing that they will only be awakened for the "all call," when there is a true emergency such as a fire or when the on-duty crew needs help.

Choose the Right Model

Too many departments are quick to blame society and other outside factors for their inability to recruit and retain volunteers without looking at their organizational model. Franklin is a true American treasure, and his department model was effective for most of the country for nearly 250 years. However, times have changed significantly and there are few departments that can use it now and expect the same results. Is your department still using the Ben Franklin model? If so, perhaps it is time to take a hard look at whether it is meeting the department's needs. More importantly, is it meeting the community's needs?

Spencer Cheatham was recently appointed fire chief for his hometown, West Point, where he has served for the past 27 years. Additionally, he has been a chief officer with New Kent Fire-Rescue and spent the last seven years working on recruitment, retention, and leadership issues for volunteer and combination departments across the country as a program manager for the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

2023 PRICE INCREASE NOTICE

Commonwealth Chief advertising rates have not increased in more than five years. Because of increased production costs that we have experienced over the past two years, we will be increasing advertising rates beginning with the January 2023 issue of the magazine.

Details will be posted on the VFCA website in the near future at www.vfca.us



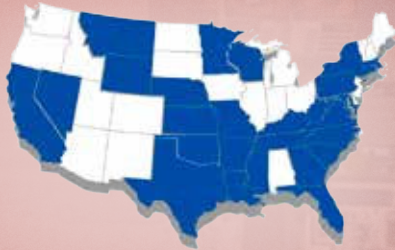
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OFFICE OF EMS TO ADOPT 2021 NATIONAL EMS EDUCATION STANDARDS

Chad Blosser, Virginia Office of EMS, Education Program Manager

For the past year, the Accreditation, Certification and Education (ACE) Division has worked closely with Training and Certification, and Medical Direction Committees to plan for the statewide rollout of the new 2021 National EMS Education Standards (NEMSES). These state committees and a number of your fellow educators have worked tirelessly over the past six months to develop policies, procedures and guidance documents to help ensure this transition is a smooth one.



At their May 2022 meeting, the State EMS Advisory Board unanimously approved a motion from the Training and Certification Committee to move forward with the process of adoption of the 2021 NEMSES. The ACE Division is now in the process of developing the necessary materials to rollout these new changes to all certified Education Coordinators in the Commonwealth this fall. There will be 11 roll-out sessions across the state, one in each Regional EMS Council area.

If you have not been actively following these changes through attendance at committee meetings or reading the updates provided by the ACE Division in the Quarterly EMS Advisory Board Report, then you will find that Virginia is taking bold steps in moving Virginia's EMS education forward during this transition.

If there is a silver lining to a worldwide pandemic, the changes the Virginia Office of EMS put in place due to COVID, forced everyone to think outside the box—this included our 700+ certified Education Coordinators. This “outside of the box” thinking resulted in new ways of conducting EMS education—specifically the learning domain—which includes all didactic, psychomotor, and affective training that an EMS learner should be taught during an EMS course to become an entry-level apprentice.

New ways of learning for students and a renewed focus on the “big picture question” in EMS: Can EMS educators and students be rewired to think of the call critically, from dispatch to transfer of care at a hospital?

Gone are the days of simple rote memorization and parroting of one or more skills from a skills sheet⁰². This practice did not produce skilled practitioners or clinicians, instead, it created pre-programmed providers who then had difficulty thinking critically on a fluid scene.

Virginia's EMS education system is embracing a bold, new educational model, which will focus on creating EMS providers who are first and foremost critical thinkers capable of managing a call from dispatch through transfer of care at a hospital. Our aim is to create a learning environment where Virginia EMS providers develop, not only medical skills, but also the analytical framework necessary to apply their trade in such a way as to live by the words of Dr. Thomas Frist: “Take care of the patient and everything else will follow.”

Anecdotal evidence shows that 27 months from the onset of COVID-19 in the United States, Virginia's EMS educators are making progress embracing this new educational model, in large part thanks to the need for quick thinking due to the pandemic.

Hope to see you in November at the Symposium!

VIRGINIA EMS SYMPOSIUM

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Registration for the largest EMS training event in Virginia, and one of the largest in the country, opens this summer. **Plan to attend the Annual Virginia EMS Symposium, Nov. 9-13, 2022**, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside and Hilton Norfolk The Main, in Norfolk, Va.

The Virginia EMS Symposium is a five-day training event that offers more than 300 classes and 13 course tracks to help providers fulfill their continuing education needs. **Learn more about the Virginia EMS Symposium at: www.vdh.virginia.gov/symposium.**

Get the latest information from the Virginia Office of EMS by following us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, or visit: www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/.



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MEET THE CHIEF



Getting to know Todd Lagow.

In this issue we will meet one of the many fire chiefs who will be spotlighted in the coming issues of Commonwealth Chief this year. Here we take a look at Todd Lagow, Chief of the Norton Fire Department.

CC: Describe your tenure in the fire service...

TL: 1988 to present - 34 plus years.

CC: Please describe your career journey...

TL: I joined Wise Fire Department and Wise County Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team in 1988. I began attending every opportunity for training that I could. In the late summer/early fall of 1988, I was deployed with the US Forrest Service to assist with firefighting efforts in the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park. In 1989, I joined Triangle Rescue Group and began training in ground search and rescue as well as high angle rescue. I was determined to have a career in the fire service. In 1990, I moved to the City of Norton and joined Norton Fire Department. I understood then that Emergency Medical Services was going to be a qualification required for most fire service jobs. I enrolled in the emergency medical technician program at Mountain Empire Community College. I completed EMT, Shock Trauma Technician and then Cardiac Technician. I was employed by Norton Rescue Squad (NRS) until moving to Harrisonburg in 1992.

While living in Harrisonburg, I initially worked for Kyger & Troubaugh Med-Tech Ambulance Service. I also joined Hose Company 4 as a firefighter. In 1994, while still working at the ambulance service, I moved to Bridgewater, Va. and joined Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department and Bridgewater Rescue Squad. In 1995, I completed the Paramedic program at Northern Virginia Community College (Annandale, Va.) and began my employment with Rockingham County Department of Fire and Rescue. I served as a Firefighter/Paramedic as well as a Hazardous Materials Specialist for the Regional Haz-Mat Team. My assignments included the Town of Grottoes serving Grottoes Fire Department and Grottoes Rescue Squad as well as McGaheysville Volunteer Fire Company.

I left Rockingham County in the fall of 1997 to return to Norton as Director/Paramedic of a local ambulance service (First Choice Ambulance Service). In 2004, I accepted a position with the City of Bristol Virginia Fire Department. While in Bristol, I was a member of the Division 4 Technical Rescue Team as well as the Bristol Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. Also in 2004, I accepted the position of Emergency Management Coordinator (part time) for the City of Norton. I also worked part time for Norton Fire Department serving in the rank of Captain.

In 2015, I was appointed Fire Chief by the City of Norton. I was still working full-time at Bristol Virginia Fire Department. In 2016, I left Bristol Fire Department to work full-time for Norton. I currently serve as Fire Chief/Emergency Management Coordinator/Hazmat Coordinator and Chief Operating Officer of Norton Rescue Squad

I currently serve as a board member of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association representing Division 4. I also serve on the executive board of the Southwest Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council.

In my time in the fire service, I have been surrounded by the most caring, intelligent, dedicated, professional, and genuine men and women that anyone could imagine. I have the most rewarding career I could imagine, all the while experiencing some of the most extreme and horrific tragedies that could be imagined. I am thankful for everyone that I have worked with. I am so fortunate to have the life and family that I have serving the community that I live in with my family. Both of my children are serving as first responders in our community as well.

CC: Please describe your Form of Government...

TL: The City of Norton operates with a Council-Manager form of local government. We have five council members that serve a four-year term. Council members elect the Mayor and Vice-Mayor to serve two-year terms. City Council appoints a City Manager. The City Manager oversees all operations of city government. Thankfully, our council and city administration are supportive of emergency services.

CC: Describe the sources of Funding for Your Organization...

TL: Our sources of funding vary somewhat by the organization. Norton Fire Department relies entirely on the City of Norton General Operating Fund for our budget. Norton Rescue Squad (NRS) relies almost entirely on revenue recovery from EMS billing. NRS receives a contribution from Wise County of \$28,000 as well as multiple types of contributions from the City of Norton including \$25,000. NRS also conducts Bingo games to raise additional operating funds.

CC: What population does your department serve...

TL: The City of Norton is the smallest City in the Commonwealth with a 2019 population estimate of 3,970. Norton Fire Department serves the entire city as well as a significant amount of area in Wise County with a population of around 4,000. Total population served is around 8,000.

CC: How many square miles do you cover...

TL: The City of Norton is 7.51 square miles. Our primary service area in Wise County is 45 square miles. Total primary service area is approximately 52.5 square miles.

CC: Describe the department composition...

TL: The Norton Fire Department is comprised of 35 volunteers plus the Chief. The Fire Chief is the only full-time position. Positions include, Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, three Captains, and four Lieutenants. Several of our officers and staff maintain full-time positions with the City of Norton in other departments. One of the Assistant Chiefs is also the Director of Public Works. The other Assistant Chief serves as the Captain of Norton Rescue Squad. One Captain is the City Engineer. Another Captain works for the Parks and Recreation Department. Two Lieutenants work for Public Works. One Lieutenant is the First Sergeant at Norton Police Department. Another Lieutenant works full-time at Norton Rescue Squad. All members are paid for their activities utilizing a points system.

CC: Tell us about your equipment...

TL: The Norton Fire Department has two stations. The main station is co-located in the City Municipal building. We share this facility with all City Administration, Norton Police Department and Norton Sheriff's Department. Our main station houses two 1993 Spartan pumpers, Engine 30 and Engine 31, as well as a 2021 Pierce Enforcer Rescue Engine, Squad 33. Our second station houses a 1995 E-One mini pumper, a 1993 Spartan/LTI 85' platform and a 2013 Polaris UTV.

Norton Rescue Squad has a separate station housing three ALS ambulances, one crash truck and one Quick Response Vehicle. A fourth ambulance is on order expected to arrive in November 2022.

CC: Describe your call summary...

TL: Norton Fire Department responded to 196 incidents in 2021. Norton Rescue Squad responded to 1,501 incidents.

CC: What is the most challenging issue or issues facing your department today?

TL: Our most challenging issue currently is how to replace our aging fleet with a limited source for local funding. With a new aerial platform truck costing over \$1,500,000 and a new engine costing around \$800,000, it is difficult, if not impossible to fund this type of capital locally. Without some type of grant funding, it is a very challenging issue. We are looking at nearly \$4,000,000 to replace the major apparatus (2 engines, 1 Mini Pumper and 1 Aerial platform) that are nearly 30 years old.

CC: How would you describe your management style?

TL: I would describe my management style as democratic/participative. I feel this is necessary given the type of department we have. As the Chief, I am ultimately responsible for the entire department, but I value the opinions and vast experience of all my staff. I am fortunate to have the dedicated staff and administration that I have. Our success would not be possible without the significant efforts of everyone around me.

CC: Does your department have a formal, long-range strategic plan?

TL: Norton Fire Department does not have a formal strategic plan.

CC: How have current economic times impacted your department?

TL: The City of Norton, Wise County and several surrounding counties have for many years, largely relied on a coal-based economy. Since 2008, coal

production in Virginia has fallen by about 50 percent and more than 60 percent in surrounding states like Kentucky. Because of these significant changes, we have seen a significant decrease in local revenues. Because of the decreases, capital project requests have remained largely unfunded and building. Some of these capital projects like apparatus replacement and construction projects are on hold. Wise County Fire and EMS Departments are the lowest county funded departments per capita (\$15.66) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This is according to the 2020 Comparative Report of Local Government Revenues and Expenditures for Fire and Rescue Services.

CC: Are you doing things differently today because of the economy?

TL: We had to change our apparatus replacement schedule and postpone plans to construct a new public safety facility. We purchased two engines and an aerial in 1992. The plan then was to replace the engines in 20 years and the aerial in 25 years. With the significant downturn in our local economy, these plans have changed significantly. We did just purchase a new rescue engine to replace a 1992 rescue truck however; four additional apparatus are nearly thirty years old. We are continuing to conduct preventive maintenance and annual testing to ensure the readiness of our fleet. Repair costs and complications of sourcing parts are increasing significantly. Our station, built in the 1950's, was not designed for the apparatus of today. This significantly limits the specification of new apparatus. We are working diligently to locate grant funding to assist with both the apparatus as well as facility construction.

Our region has relied upon traditional economic industries such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. However, these industries have been in a steady decline for the last 30 years in Southwest Virginia. Since 1990, the mining, manufacturing, and agriculture industries have declined 45 percent, 50 percent, and 35 percent, respectively. From 2000-2013, Norton saw a 46 percent decline in mining related jobs, mirrored in surrounding Wise County's 44 percent drop during that same period. These continue to decline rapidly even today.

Since the city has historically been a service-based economy for a region consisting of portions of five coalfield counties, the overall loss of key basic regional employment has significantly impacted our local revenues and our ability to make significant capital investments. The best example of that impact can best be seen in the significant decline in our primary revenue source, retail sales tax. The City's collection of retail sales taxes experienced a nearly 24 percent decline from 2009 (\$2,030,206) to 2017 (\$1,548,394). From that period, it has flat lined, with some years worse than others. This may not seem like a large amount to overcome, but our local taxes account for 48 percent of the General Fund's revenue. Therefore, the City has been forced to increase real estate, personal property, meals and lodging taxes over the past several years to just balance budgets. Our housing market continues to age with residents being unable to complete many upgrades due to the poor economic conditions, which results in our assessed value continuing to decline as well. In addition to the declining assessed values, many of our commercial properties are leased by public agencies, state agencies, or medical facilities that are tax exempt. Therefore, the City does not receive any tax revenues from these properties.

The revenue decline in retail sales, other key revenue items, and the increase in debt service of over \$10 million for school system related projects have caused the city to make dramatic cuts in various expenditure categories, with the biggest hit going towards capital projects. Historically, the city has self-funded many capital projects on an annual basis to the tune of an average of over \$550,000. Over the last few years, the city has invested less than \$100,000 per year throughout all departments including Public Safety, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Community Development, and City Facilities. In other words, our capital needs are falling quickly behind, and we have had to rely on grants to assist with any new capital investments.

CC: What challenges do you see facing the fire service today?

TL: Our most significant issue is funding. We are continuously facing increased demand for our services while being faced with significant increases in costs for everything we do. The increased cost for staffing, PPE, apparatus, and other goods are quickly exceeding our financial abilities. At the same time expanded or increasing requirements and/or expectations are occurring.

CC: What do you look for in a new recruit?

TL: The biggest trait we look for in a recruit is integrity and ethics. Without those guiding principles, it would be difficult to succeed as a firefighter. All fire and EMS responders must have these traits. I do not believe integrity is something that can be trained or developed. Our new recruits must have a willingness to learn, a desire to serve (with little to no pay) and the ability to commit a significant amount of time to the department.

CC: How do you view training?

TL: Knowledge skills and ability (KSA's) are key to everything we do. Because of the critical nature of the tasks we face, the proper training, skills and the ability to carry out these tasks are critical. We have a basic set of training that we expect all new members to complete. It has become more difficult for our members to attain this training due to limited availability of courses locally. Our members are encouraged to continue their training and education in fire and EMS.

CC: Do you have a close working relationship with neighboring departments?

TL: We have a great relationship with our neighboring departments. We are all members of the Wise County Fire Association. We meet frequently and discuss various issues, policies, and related concerns. The ability to meet and work together is vital in our ability to serve our communities.

CC: What's in the future for the fire service as you see it?

TL: The future of the fire service will see an increase in the expectations of the citizens in the services we provide. Volunteer departments will be particularly impacted in these changes as they have already experienced. We will continue to see increased training requirements, service levels and costs to provide these services. These changes will make it more difficult for volunteers to meet the expectations of the job. Communities that want to maintain their level of service will need to apply more efforts in retention and recruitment of volunteers. Communities will also need to supplement volunteers with full-time staff as volunteer hours decline.

I hope that the fire service continues work to protect our staff from the various negative impacts of the job. These negative impacts include occupational cancer, and physical injuries. We need to continue to improve efforts to mitigate the negative physiological impacts of the job. PTSD is a significant issue that many if not all first responders deal with every day. Because these traumatic events occur over a period of many years, the impact may be so gradual that the change is not visible to our families or us. I hope the fire service continues to increase our efforts to protect our members from all of these negative impacts of the job.

CC: How has being a member of the VFCA helped you become a better chief/leader?

TL: Being a member of VFCA has provided valuable educational and networking opportunities. It is an honor to serve alongside so many highly experienced and trusted leaders across our great commonwealth. I have been able to reach out and request assistance with a need. With the network of the VFCA, the request for assistance was quickly filled. I also have the ability to reach out to various leaders to ask for resources, advice, an opinion or other help. Being a member of the board is beneficial to our department, our region and me

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ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

Creasy Appointed as Executive Director at VDFP

The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security is pleased to announce that Governor Youngkin has appointed Brad Creasy as the Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. He will begin his role on May 23.

Creasy is an accomplished public safety professional with more than 26 years of fire and emergency service experience.



He began his career with the Bedford Volunteer Fire Department before becoming a career firefighter with the Roanoke Fire-EMS Department. Creasy served in Roanoke City for 21 years and rose through the ranks to Captain. Creasy has served the past 15 years as the fire chief for the Town of Bedford.

Creasy received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Liberty University. He is a Virginia Fire Officer Academy graduate and holds the Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFO) from the Center for Public Safety Excellence.

Please join us in welcoming Chief/Director Creasy to his new role and thanking Jared Goff for serving as Acting Executive Director.

Chief Keith Johnson named as Fire Services Board Chair

At the June 3rd Virginia Fire Services Board Meeting, Chief Keith Johnson of Loudoun County Fire and Rescue was elected as Chairman of that body. Good Luck moving forward Chief!

Bedford County announces new Fire & Rescue Director

Janet Blankenship was appointed interim chief in November 2021 and will now officially serve in that role.

The Bedford County native has spent 16 years with the department, and prior to that served 14 years at Bedford Memorial Hospital.

She'll oversee about 50 staff members and says one of her goals is to grow the organization to better meet the needs of the community.

"It requires that we have the staff to complement that in order to get that work done. It's what we owe our citizens to ensure that, in their time of need, we can deliver the services that are so valuable to them," said Blankenship.

Blankenship succeeds Chief Jack Jones.

Hopewell hires new fire chief

The City of Hopewell has assigned Benjamin M. Ruppert as the city's new fire chief. Ruppert has had more than 23 years of experience in emergency management and EMS. His position prior was serving as Interim Fire Chief for Hopewell beginning in November 2021. In this new role, Ruppert will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of Hopewell's two fire stations and Hopewell Fire and Rescue personnel. "Chief Ruppert is an outstanding choice as fire chief for the City of Hopewell," said City Manager, March Altman. "Chief Ruppert not only possesses the education, real-world experience and leadership skills, but he also has a true passion for our Hopewell Community." Ruppert has also served as Chair of the Emergency Management Alliance of

Central Virginia and is currently completing his fifth term on the Board of the Virginia Emergency Management Association.

West Point's first full-time Chief named

The Town of West Point is pleased to announce the May 1 appointment of its first full-time fire chief, Spencer Cheatham. He will work with leaders from both the Town and the West Point Volunteer Fire Department (WPVFD) to continue the great service the fire department has rendered over the years and to find ways to improve the safety of the community for the future.

Cheatham is a lifelong resident of the Town of West Point and has volunteered with the WPVFD since 1995, serving in various roles including firefighter, EMT, captain, assistant chief and fire chief. He previously served in several positions with New Kent Fire-Rescue from 2004 to 2010, including firefighter/EMT, lieutenant, interim fire chief and battalion chief.

Chief Cheatham holds numerous certifications in fire, EMS, rescue and emergency management and has published 15 articles in various fire service publications. He has also served as an adjunct instructor with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and participates on local advisory committees. Chief Cheatham holds an undergraduate degree from George Mason University.

"We are excited to have Spencer serve as our new fire chief," said John Edwards, West Point Town Manager. "The Town has been very fortunate to have enjoyed the outstanding service from the West Point Volunteer Fire Department over the last century and we are hopeful that by hiring the Town's first full-time fire chief to assume much of the administrative burden, we can help the volunteers to continue to thrive and provide the high level of professional service to which the Town is accustomed. Spencer is the right person to build on the traditions of the West Point Volunteer Fire Department and lead the firefighting efforts in West Point into a successful future."

Deputy State Coordinator Erin Sutton reappointed by Governor Youngkin

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) is pleased to announce that Governor Glenn Youngkin has reappointed Erin Sutton as Chief Deputy State Coordinator of Emergency Management for VDEM. Ms. Sutton has served in this position since October 2020 and previously served as Director of the City of Virginia Beach Office of Emergency Management.



"We are fortunate to have such a top notch leader that came to us with an extensive background in public service at the local level," said VDEM State Coordinator Shawn Talmadge. "Erin has been instrumental in strategically leading the agency over the past several years and we are pleased that she has decided to remain with the agency."

Ms. Sutton has worked in the field of emergency management for the past 15 years. Prior to her role as Emergency Management Director, Erin also held positions with the Virginia Beach Department of Public Health, developing the Virginia Beach Medical Reserve Corps and leading the citywide pandemic planning effort as Emergency Planner. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Radford University and her Master of Science in Microbiology and Immunology from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. She is a Certified Emergency Manager, Certified Floodplain Manager, and has her Project Management Professional certification.

A NEW RESOURCE FOR MALE FIREFIGHTERS OVER AGE 40: "40PLUSFIRE"

Billy Goldfeder, Deputy Chief, Loveland-Symes Fire Department



After going through prostate cancer myself in late 2021, I wanted to share my story and journey, along with resources to help other firefighters and their families. That's why I helped develop a non-profit, non-commercial site that includes prostate cancer prevention information, how to get checked, and what to do if diagnosed. It is short, sweet, and to the point – written for and by firefighters. www.40plusfire.com is focused on active male firefighters aged 40 and above... to help you and those you love understand one of the most prominent "firefighter" cancers: Prostate cancer.

www.40plusfire.com was created because there are too many sick or dead firefighters who just didn't understand prostate cancer, didn't know it could be symptom-free, and just avoided getting checked. This "firefighter friendly" site is no BS, written in plain English, and explains why firefighters aged 40 and above must get checked. The lack of understanding about prostate cancer is big, and this will help.

www.40plusfire.com has very easy to access information. For example, it has a simple one-page document for firefighters to hand, text, or email to their physician (created by Boston Fire Department Physician and former Boston Firefighter Dr. Mike Hamrock), as well as numerous prostate cancer resources, links, and videos...and visitors can request FREE helmet stickers.

The Maltese cross sticker features a hose line with a coupling (a prostate) and a "nozzle." It's a real conversation starter!

Please take a look, share the link, and be sure to check out who and which fire service organizations are involved in the site. I encourage you to download the documents and please let me know if you have any questions.

WHAT IS PROSTATE CANCER?

Prostate Cancer is a cancer in a man's prostate, a small walnut-sized gland that produces seminal fluid. A man's prostate produces the seminal fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. Symptoms include difficulty with urination, but sometimes there are no symptoms at all.

Some types of prostate cancer grow slowly. In some of these cases, monitoring is recommended. Other types are aggressive and require radiation, surgery, hormone therapy, chemotherapy, or other treatments.

WHY AM I AT RISK AS A MALE FIREFIGHTER, AGE 40 AND ABOVE?

As a firefighter (career, volunteer-whatever!), our "workplace" is toxic. Even with the best gear and SCBA, we absorb carcinogens. Furthermore, prostate cancer is a prominent MALE disease. So as a firefighter you INCREASE your risk significantly. Numerous studies have estimated the increased risk of prostate cancer in male firefighters. Studies have found a 1.15-fold increased risk of prostate cancer diagnosis – meaning that for every 100 non-firefighters with prostate cancer there were 115 male firefighters diagnosed.

HOW DO I FIND OUT IF I HAVE PROSTATE CANCER?

Because there are often NO SYMPTOMS, EVERY firefighter MUST make their physician aware that they are a FIREFIGHTER...be it career, part time or volunteer. IF YOU DO NOT inform your physician that you are a FIREFIGHTER, there may be reluctance to perform a digital exam and to order a PSA test.

WHAT IS A PSA TEST?

The most common screening tool for prostate cancer is the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. This is a simple blood test that measures the presence of PSA circulating in your bloodstream. This test is usually the first step in any prostate cancer diagnosis.

Late Breaking News...

Brook Pittinger resigns from VDFFP

As we were preparing to go to press with this edition of Commonwealth Chief, we were notified that Brook Pittinger, Assistant Chief of Administration & Risk Management Services had resigned from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs effective Friday, June 3rd.

Chief Keith Johnson named as Fire Services Board Chair

At the June Virginia Fire Services Board Meeting, Chief Keith Johnson of Loudoun County Fire and Rescue was elected as Chairman of that body. Good Luck moving forward Chief!

VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July

21 Executive Officers Meeting
1000 Hours Henrico

August

1 Sound the Alarm Summit
8:00AM Fulghum Center

18 VFCA Full Board Meeting
1000 Hours Henrico

September

15 Executive Officers Meeting
1000 Hours Henrico

18 5th Annual VFCA Williamsburg Golf Tournament
Golden Horseshoe Williamsburg
1230 Hours

October

7-9 VFCA Annual Retreat
0800 Hours Staunton

9 5th Annual VFCA Salem Golf Tournament
Hanging Rock Golf Club Salem
1200 Hours

8 VFCA Full Board Meeting Staunton

15-16 Adm. Professional Retreat Roanoke

November

18-19 Company Officers Summit
0800 Hours Sandston

17 Executive Officers Meeting
1000 Hours Henrico

December

15 VFCA Full Board Meeting
1000 Hours Henrico

TENTATIVE 2023 DATES

Mar. 11 3rd Annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation
5K Run/Walk Williamsburg

May 11-12 9th Annual Chiefs Summit Henrico

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS SECTION NEWS

Melissa Heiderman, President
Administrative Professionals Section



Happy Spring / Summer! With the summer months quickly approaching, there are many activities happening within our Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA). The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation's (VFCA) next golf tournaments are scheduled for June 17th in Spotsylvania, September 16th in Williamsburg, and October 3rd in Salem. Assistance from the Administrative Professionals Section (APS) is always appreciated at the golf tournaments. Help may include anything from the registration table, ticket table, or general assistance. Please reach out to your Board of Directors if you are interested in helping at any of the tournaments.

In addition to golf tournaments and fundraising efforts, this time of year has many learning opportunities available. The annual Virginia Fire Officers' Academy (VFOA) and Virginia Chief Officers' Academy (VCOA) will be held in early June; while no support from our section is required at these academies, we want to wish all participants a successful week. The Sound the Alarm Summit will also be held in August.

Our APS Retreat is quickly approaching in September. Once registration is open, the information and link will be provided to members and posted online. If you do not already follow our Facebook page, please be sure to do so on Facebook @administrativeprofessionalssection.

As with the Presidents before me, and those who will come after me, let me ask – do you have Administrative Professionals in your organization (career, volunteer, or combination)? If yes, are they currently participating in the VFCA Administrative Professionals Section? If not, why? Meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend, whether a member or not. This may be a good way to introduce administrative staff to our group.

I would ask that you please share our section information with your administrative staff and encourage them to participate. We meet quarterly and have a two day retreat annually; then, we assist at the annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Conference. Funds raised at the conference go to the VFCA for educational opportunities, in the form of scholarships and grants, to fire and emergency services professionals across the Commonwealth. If you or your staff any questions about the group, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

On behalf of everyone in the APS, please have a safe, healthy, and happy Spring and Summer!

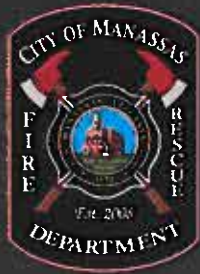
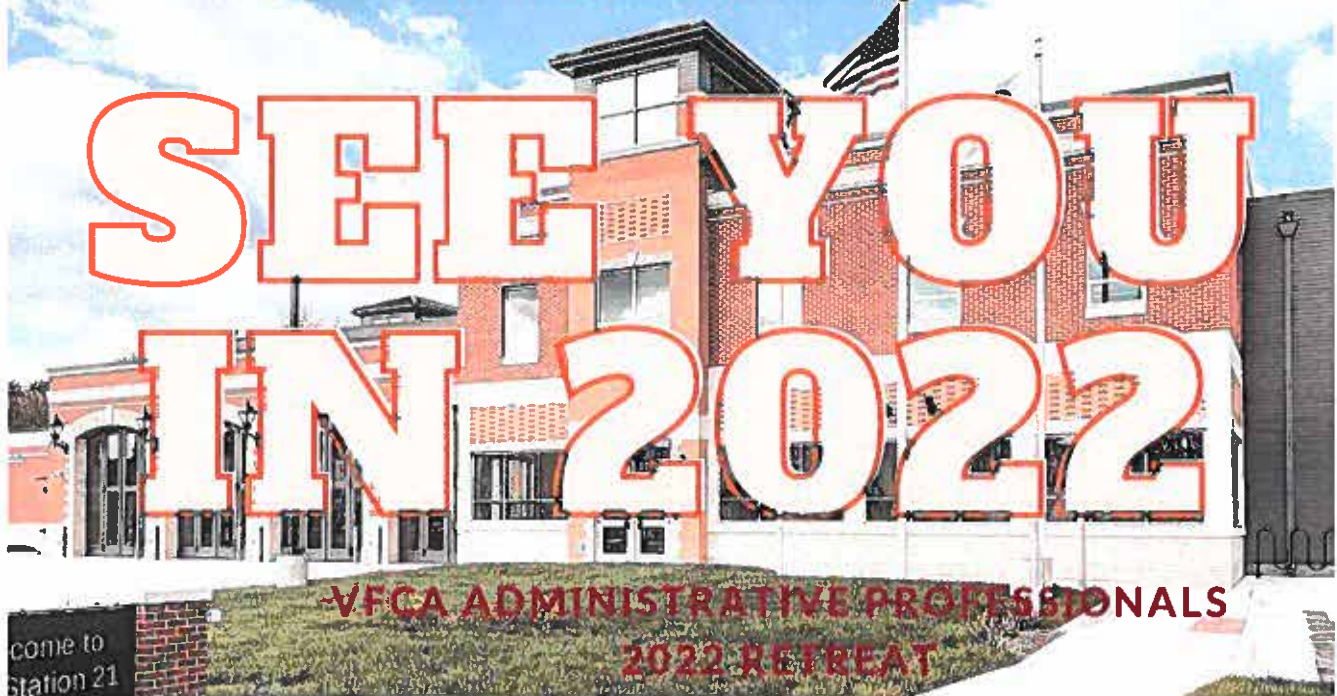


MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

City of Manassas Fire and Rescue
to host the 2022 VFCA Administrative
Professionals Group Annual Retreat

SEPTEMBER 22 - 23, 2022

CITY OF MANASSAS FIRE AND RESCUE



City of Manassas

SEPTEMBER 22 - 23, 2022



Contact Melissa Heiderman, MHeiderman@ManassasVA.gov



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SCAN ME

Help keep residents safe during a natural gas emergency

Every day, natural gas is safely and efficiently delivered to millions of businesses and homes in the United States through more than 2 million miles of underground pipeline.

Virginia Natural Gas operates, secures and maintains the pipeline in our service territory. With safety being our highest priority, we adhere to federal, state and local pipeline safety regulations by performing extensive quality control checks, educate the public on natural gas pipeline, leak recognition and damage prevention and work closely with emergency and public officials to develop emergency response plans.

How to recognize a pipeline leak

- **LOOK** for blowing dirt, discolored vegetation or continued bubbling of standing water.
- **LISTEN** for a hissing or roaring noise near a natural gas appliance or line.
- **SMELL** for the distinctive, rotten-egg odor associated with natural gas. Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add a chemical odorant called mercaptan for easy detection of a suspected natural gas leak. This odorant has a distinctive "rotten egg" type odor. You should act any time you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air. Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations.

Note: Be aware that some individuals may not be able to detect the odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell, olfactory fatigue or because the odor is being masked by other odors in the area. Certain conditions may cause the odorant to diminish so that it is not detectable. Some gas lines, due to their unique function, may not have odor at all.

Learn more

For more information about natural gas and emergency response procedures and training, contact us at **800.552.7473**.

To learn about our emergency response plan, which recognizes and mitigates threats and also sustains the integrity of the pipelines. Visit virginiannaturalgas.com/integritymanagementplan.

Complete your training today!

Earn a one-hour training credit and certificate of course completion while learning about the importance of natural gas pipeline safety.

virginiannaturalgas.com/respondertraining
(Use password: virginia)

Help keep everyone safe during a natural gas emergency

Even though natural gas pipeline incidents are uncommon, it is still important to be prepared by knowing the signs of a potential problem.

You should take the following action any time you detect any of the signs of a pipeline leak:

- **DO NOT** try to identify the source to stop the leak yourself.
- **AVOID** using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles, light switches or landlines, as natural gas can ignite from a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion. Natural gas is non-toxic, lighter than air and displaces oxygen. In severe cases, if not used properly, natural gas can also lead to asphyxiation.
- **CALL** Virginia Natural Gas immediately at our 24-hour emergency response line **800.552.7473** with the location and type of emergency.
- **SECURE** the area by establishing a safety zone around the incident and control access. You may need to reroute traffic and evacuate area homes and businesses.

How we respond

Once we are notified of the emergency, we will immediately dispatch trained personnel to the site, keeping you informed of our progress. We will take all necessary actions to correct the problem. We will work together to ensure our community is safe.

Prevention – the best defense against leaks

Emergency officials and first responders do their part daily to prevent natural gas leaks by keeping the following safety tips in mind:

- Understand that natural gas is lighter than air and displaces oxygen. Although natural gas is non-toxic, in extreme cases of oxygen displacement, it may lead to asphyxiation. Natural gas has a risk of ignition near a spark or open flame.
- Know where the pipelines are in your jurisdiction. If you notice any missing or damaged pipeline markers, contact Virginia Natural Gas at **1.866.229.3578** so they can be replaced.
- Virginia law requires all underground utilities be marked before any type of digging or excavation. Be on the lookout for any suspicious activity or unauthorized digging. If the excavator has not notified the state of their intent to dig, they must stop all activity immediately. The excavator is required to present a valid dig ticket number when requested by first responders. Also, no one, including homeowners, should be digging, ditching, drilling, leveling or plowing without having first contacted our state's One-Call number (**811**) to locate underground utilities.
- Remember, pipeline markers, like the sample pictured, indicate only the general area of the pipeline and not the exact location or depth. Pipeline markers may not be present in all areas.
- Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) and online at: npms.phmsa.dot.gov.



 Virginia Natural Gas



Online Survey

Please take a moment to complete a survey about natural gas safety and you by scanning the QR code or visiting surveymonkey.com/r/FV2MQPB to help us make sure we are keeping our communities safe.

KNOW YOUR WHY

AN IMMIGRANT'S JOURNEY TO CITIZENSHIP AND SERVICE

MARLON SMITH

In early 1954 a young Portuguese immigrant named Antonio boarded a ship for Canada from northern Portugal. He was leaving his newborn daughter and his wife behind to pursue a better life for his family. This is the beginning of my grandfather's story and my inspiration. My Avo's (Portuguese for Grandfather) journey pushes me today to stay humble and hungry. As I am an immigrant from Canada, my grandfather's sacrifice and search of a better life for our family is part of "Knowing My Why" in my passion for service. After four years establishing himself in Canada, my grandfather brought my mother and grandmother to North America. In the many years that followed, he sponsored 100 more Portuguese citizens to get settled in Canada and help them achieve their dreams.

My desire to contribute more pushed me to become a US citizen and then enlist in the USAF Reserve in 2003. I was driven by the idea of giving back to a country that had offered me so much by pursuing a career in helping people. As firefighters and first responders, we are challenged in very dangerous situations, and in those moments of fear, it is important to "Know Your Why." I remind myself every day of my purpose and privilege to serve people having the worst day of their lives.

I have been blessed to serve in the fire service and military for the last 19 years. This pride to serve in uniform and help people was "My Why" when I first joined. After 9/11 in 2001, I had a Green Card and had lived in America since I was six years old. During the attacks on 9/11, I felt a profound responsibility like so many young men and women to support America. It was at that moment watching the firefighters running into burning towers that I dedicated my energy to becoming a US citizen and to contribute more to America.

In early 2003, surrounded by 25 immigrants from all different countries at the federal building in Atlanta, GA I was naturalized. I was so proud to pledge my allegiance to the United States of America and become a US citizen. Several weeks later I met with my local recruiter to complete my commitment to serve my country and solidify "My Why." As I was reviewing jobs in the USAF the recruiter told me about a "Fire Apprentice" position. This position was described as being part of a firefighting team. The word "team" is what stuck out to me most in the position description. The idea of serving in fellowship with men and women to help mitigate an emergency got my attention.

Over the years, "My Why" has expanded to include my wife and children, as well as the incredible men and women I have led as a military officer and assistant chief fire officer. However, I am never too far in thought from my grandfather's odyssey. He had little work opportunities in Portugal and a new baby on the way. My grandfather could see the struggle in front of him and knew that joining a work program in a foreign country, as scary as it seemed, would offer him more than what he could accomplish in Portugal. My Avo was willing to leave his family for his "Why," and he was able to remain focused on his "Why" every day. This drive pushed him to learn English and French as well as continue his education to get better and

better jobs. He knew that each better paying job and continued educational course would get him closer to his family. He would never let his lack of education get in the way of his pursuits.

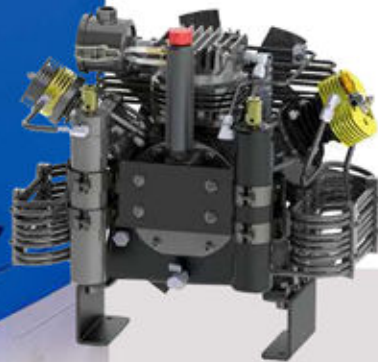
As firefighters and leaders, we are challenged daily to provide the highest level of service to our customers. The service we provide requires us to better understand our own mental health. This awareness and requirement to perform at peak mental and physical fitness requires an internal understanding of a person's unwavering dedication to principles. The men and women who have lost their home or lost a loved one rely on us to be compassionate and competent during their emergency. I firmly believe that we must be reminded of why we serve daily. When we have to deal with a difficult situation, our internal drive for excellence should be branded into our mind. Your "Why," whatever that may be, should motivate, nourish and sustain the effort and integrity of your work.



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SHOULD THE USE OF LIGHTS AND SIRENS USED IN EMS RESPONSES BE REDUCED?

The National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) and 13 other emergency medical services- (EMS-) affiliated national agencies say, "Yes."

In a 4-page joint statement PDF, the NAEMSP and 13 additional sponsoring agencies make several recommendations for safely decreasing the use of lights and sirens.

The recommendations include:

- Raising awareness among municipal government leaders of the increased risks.
- Monitoring lights and sirens use to improve understanding of why and when it is being used.
- Developing protocols for emergency call triage to identify subsets of calls that may warrant use of lights and sirens.

Although EMS lights and sirens have traditionally been used to decrease response times and increase visibility of EMS vehicles, there is evidence showing that use of ambulance lights and sirens significantly increases risk of vehicle crashes.

For more information go to: <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/blog/ig-041422.html>

THE 2022 VIRGINIA FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS & EMS MEMORIAL SERVICE

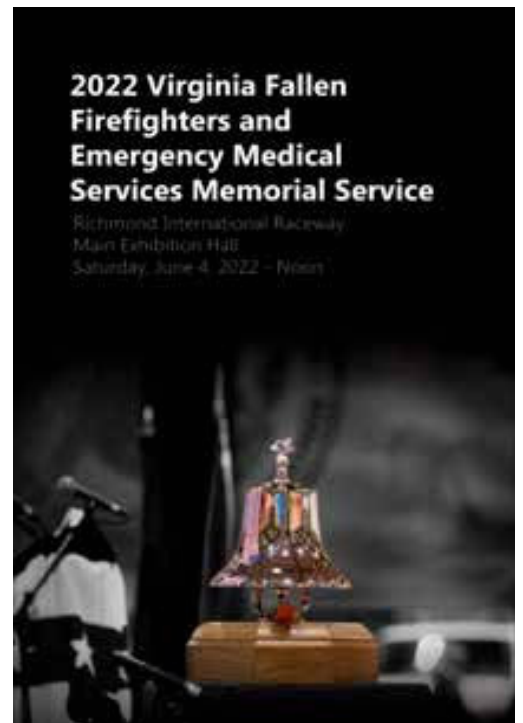
The 25th annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters & Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service was held at 12 p.m. on Saturday, June 4, 2022 at the Richmond International Raceway Complex, Main Exhibition Hall. This event was open to the public.

This year's Memorial Service honored Fallen Firefighters who have been recognized in the Virginia Line of Duty Act in 2022 for their bravery and dedication to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

2022 Honorees

- Sean H. Land - Virginia Beach Fire Department
- Todd A. Landreth - Norfolk International Airport Fire Department
- Lawrence J. Phipps - Hanover Fire and EMS
- Lyndell N. Woods - Fort Lewis Volunteer Fire Department

The Memorial Service included a keynote address, a Virginia Fire Services Honor Guard procession, a musical performance, and a fire and EMS apparatus display from departments throughout the Commonwealth. State flags will be presented to the families of the fallen.





VFCF ANNOUNCES BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENTS FOR 2022



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation will be holding three benefit golf tournaments around the Commonwealth in 2022. The proceeds from these events will be used to help support the continuance of the Virginia Fire Officers Academy and the Virginia Chief Officers Academy. In addition, scholarships are also supported for first responders and or their immediate family members.

Event	Date	Start Time
8th Annual VFCF /Williamsburg –Golden Horseshoe POC–Beth Eberhardt– eeberhardt@williamsburg.gov or 757-220-6220	9-16-22	1230 Hours
7th Annual VFCF /Salem –Blacksburg Country Club POC–John Prillaman– jprillaman@salemva.gov or 540-375-3080	10-3-22	1200 Hours

Additional information can also be found at www.vfca.us . The VFCF is actively seeking sponsors and door prizes for each of these events. The goal for these three events for 2021 is \$50,000.

STUDY LED BY LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SHOWS FIREFIGHTERS MORE AT RISK FOR DANGEROUS HEART CONDITION

A new study, led by LSU Health Shreveport cardiac electrophysiologist and professor Dr. Paari Dominic, finds that firefighters are at an increased risk for a dangerous heart condition.

Atrial fibrillation, or A-Fib, is an irregular heart rhythm in the top chambers of the heart. The condition causes the upper chambers to beat so fast they can no longer pump blood, putting the body at risk for clotting and stroke.

Uncontrolled blood pressure, diabetes, sleep apnea, and heart disease are all risk factors that can cause it. So can environmental pollution. That's where firefighters come in.

The study, published in the Journal of the "American Heart Association," found that the more fires firefighters respond to, the higher their risk for A-Fib. In fact, after adjusting for risk factors, researchers found a 14% increased risk of A-Fib for every five fires fought each year.

Dominic says that is partly due to chemicals and particles released into the air during fires, in combination with physiological factors.

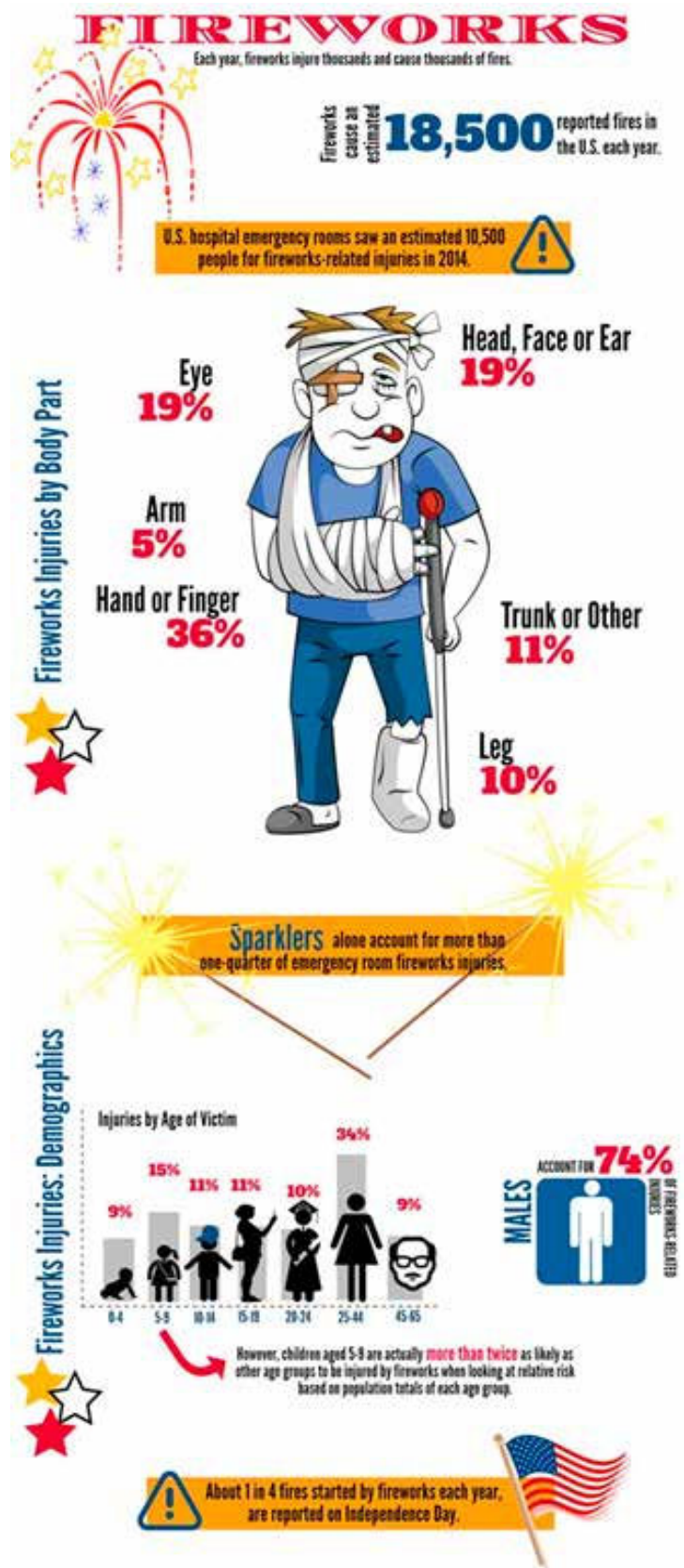
"Firefighters are probably the only group of individuals that are not only increasingly exposed to these particulate matter and chemicals, but they also have the physiological risks involved with them. For example, when they fight fires, their heart rate goes up because their adrenaline levels go up because it's a very dangerous situation that they're in," Dominic said. "Also, their fluid levels, the body volume of water, goes down because it's heat, it causes dehydration. So, their heart rate goes up."

And every fire puts them more at risk.

Dominic says he hopes this finding will encourage firefighters to seek treatment for other risk factors that could add to the danger. In addition, they should be aware of A-Fib symptoms — heart palpitations, dizziness, light-headedness and fatigue— and get medical attention as needed.

He would also like to see companies that produce protective gear create lighter, easier to use equipment that firefighters could keep on during the clean-up period.

"What happens is many times firefighters actually take off the protective equipment after the fire is over, when they clean up the area. Unfortunately, because it's heavy, it is uncomfortable for them to wear the equipment for hours at a time," Dominic said. "The environmental particulate matter is not disappearing after the fire is done. It lingers in the air."



Be safe. If you want to see fireworks, go to a public show put on by experts.

For more information, please visit: www.nfpa.org/fireworks



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

*Information sourced from CPSC, and NFPA's "Fireworks Report"

A MOST SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OUR 2022 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE SPONSORS!

We are pleased to be able to recognize these Companies that have gone above and beyond this year and that have continued to support the VFCA!

PLEASE HELP US EXTEND OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE SPONSORS. THEIR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE VFCA TO DELIVER THE OUTSTANDING AND AFFORDABLE CONFERENCE YOU EXPERIENCED!

THANK YOU!

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Virginia Department of Emergency Management



NEW REPORT EXPLORES FIRE RISK FOR U.S. POPULATION

The risk of death or injury from fire is not the same for everyone. Our latest topical fire report, *Fire Risk in 2019*, explores fire risk for people living in the United States and why for some groups of people, fire risk is more severe.



African Americans and American Indians/Alaska Natives were at a greater relative risk of dying in a fire in 2019 than the general population.

Risk is a factor, element or course of action involving uncertainty. It is an exposure to some peril, and it often

implies a probability of occurrence, such as investment risk or insurance risk. In terms of the fire problem, risk is the potential for the death of or injury to a person, or damage to or loss of property, as a result of fire.

The risk of death or injury from fire is not the same for everyone. In 2019, fires caused 3,515 deaths and 16,600

injuries in the U.S.¹ These casualties were not equally distributed across the U.S. population, and the resulting

risk of death or injury from fire is not uniform — it is more severe for some groups than for others.² Much can be

learned from understanding why different segments of society are at a heightened risk from the fire problem.

This topical fire report explores fire risk as it applies to fire casualties in the U.S. population and is an update to

“Fire Risk in 2017,” Volume 20, Issue 3. The focus is on how fire risk, specifically the risks of death or injury, varies

with age and how other demographic factors weigh upon that risk.

To read the report, go to:

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/statistics/v21i8.pdf>

VFCA Administrative Professionals Section is Looking for New Members



Why Belong?

- There is the opportunity for networking with your peers at your quarterly meetings and the annual conference
- There are training and educational opportunities at your meetings
- Quarterly magazine *Commonwealth Chief*... new and updated information
- Website
- VFC Foundation Scholarship Program, several APS members have benefited
- You have become more rounded, better educated and more valuable to your organization
- Find new ways to contribute

FESCO



**DEMO EXT PUMPER
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EXT PUMPER /COMMANDER CHASSIS



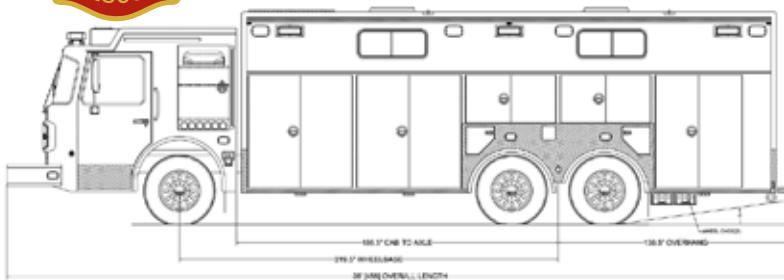
2022 COMMANDER CHASSIS
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ROSENBAUER N55 1500 MIDSHIP PTO PUMP
TANK: POLY 750 GALLON
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HOSEBED: 1000' LDH / 80'-3" / 400'-5.75"
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25' WALK-IN RESCUE
2022 SPARTAN GLADIATOR 2DR CAB
CUMMINS X12 500 HP ENGINE
IFS AIR RIDE FRONT SUSPENSION
RAYDON TANDEM REAR AIR RIDE SUSPENSION



THANK YOU, STAFFORD COUNTY!



75' MM QUINT /COMMANDER CHASSIS



MODEL 623F AMBULANCE



FREDERICK COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE
2022 HORTON MODEL 623F
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